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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development and implementation of an intensive summer course in English as a Second Language (ESL) designed for children aged 4-5. Planning included development of a curriculum and instructional materials based on theory and practice in the teaching of young children, English language learning and instruction, and curriculum development. The teacher had native-like English skills and limited conversational ability in the children's first language (Japanese). A Japanese-speaking aide was available for emergency interpretation. No effort was made to foster the children's first language or culture in the course. A theme-based curriculum with topics of interest to young children was devised. It was implemented in a six-week half-day course at an Okinawa (Japan) private school. Curriculum and classroom components common in preschool education were also used here, including learning centers, pre-literacy exposure to English, and work tasks to reinforce past content. Teacher journals, student pre- and post-course evaluations, and students' expressive language samples were used to analyze course effectiveness. Results indicate that the short-term immersion course is a viable and effective method of teaching English to young children. Recommendations for classroom practice and for instructional materials development are also made. (MSE)

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Young Children Learning English as a Second Language: An Intensive Summer Program

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Jayne Sowers, Ed.D.

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Introduction

English as an academic subject throughout the world, especially in Asia, has a long history. Yet for the length of time the subject has been taught, the results have been unsatisfactory. Current students of English do not generally become fluent speakers of the language (Scholefield, 1994) even though they may have studied the language for five to ten years, generally beginning in junior high (Campbell & Yong, 1993; Chang, 1991; Hayashi, 1994). One alternative to this problem is *the instruction of English at younger ages*. Programs both in the United States and overseas are admitting students at younger and younger ages. Currently certain language schools and public schools provide English classes for young children - those in preschool and kindergarten. However, the materials used with the young children is not appropriate for their interests or needs.

In response to this problem, this study attempts to provide critically-needed support to *young* learners of English as a second language and those who teach them by developing appropriate methods and materials for teaching and learning. This study is non-traditional in that its outcome is a product - a curriculum for young English language learners. The research component, then, is the study of the development and implementation of the curriculum. The study's final component offers recommendations for future materials development and teaching practices specifically for young children learning English as a second language.

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The Current State of Affairs

During the summer of 1995, I visited a number of programs in Japan which were teaching English to young children (ages 4-7 years). Generally two types of methods were observed. The first consisted of the presentation of picture cards for memorization and drill of single vocabulary words in isolation (Japanese Language Club Teachers). No attempt was made to go beyond the single word stage or to move beyond receptive understanding of the vocabulary. The second type of method consisted of worksheets or workbooks again based upon memorization and drill (Kumon). Neither real objects nor real conversational interactions were utilized.

Upon returning to the United States I reviewed books and materials advertised by publishers as appropriate for young learners learning English as a second or foreign language. A grid of the various materials revealed that of the ten books reviewed all ten included some type of student activity book, 6/10 discussed the English language teaching approaches undergirding the lessons, but only 2/10 explicitly stated the early childhood belief underlying the activities presented. In addition some of the materials were not appropriate for young children in numerous ways :

- black and white rather than color drawings
- small rather than larger drawings
- too many objects on a page causing visual clutter
- fine motor tasks required beyond the abilities of a young child
- a focus on learning of the alphabet and reading rather than upon preliteracy skills

From this examination, it was discovered that current materials on the market are <u>not</u> appropriate for young children learning English as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL). The only exception found to this dire state was Addison-Wesley's <u>Amazing English</u> (Walker, Grigsby, Hooper, Linse, McCloskey, Schottman & Walter, 1996) which utilizes current early childhood education (ECE) and English language teaching (ELT) theories and methods. However, the cost of the program at $300 may be prohibitive for many schools and classrooms.

The Significance of the Study

The goal of my study based upon the review of current programs and materials was to develop and implement a curriculum through an intensive English program specifically designed to meet the needs of *young* children. The components of the study were defined as:

intensive - a six-week, four hour program led by a native-like speaker of English who had limited conversational ability in the students' first language (Japanese)

program - the development and implementation of a curriculum based upon the theory, research, and practice in three areas: (1) teaching young children, (2) English language teaching, and (3) curriculum development

in English - a program conducted entirely in English but with a Japanese aide available for emergency interpreting when needed; the focus was on English and no attempt was made to foster the students' development in their L1 or L1 culture

This was considered appropriate for two reasons:

(1) the students were in an EFL environment, spending only 4 hours a day in the English environment; they were not at risk of loosing their L1 or L1 culture

(2) the program was for a limited time during the summer (6 weeks) again which even in an ESL situation would not put the students at-risk for loosing their L1

young children - as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as ages 3-7 yrs. For the purposes of this study the children were 4-5 year olds

Curriculum Development, Implementation, and Review

The development of the curriculum was in response to the inappropriateness of materials for young ESL-EFL children. In the materials the authors (except for "Amazing English") did not explicitly present or discuss the theories of early childhood education or of language and language learning that informed the practices which they were

recommending. Instead the materials contained a list of vocabulary, syntax, objectives or activities. To avoid developing a curriculum with a similar problem - not being grounded in theory - the curriculum herein was developed in four phases (1) Theoretical Phase, (2) Planning Phase, (3) Implementation Phase, and (4) Spiral Review Phase.

Theoretical Phase

The use of theory to undergird curriculum development is encouraged in both of the fields of early childhood education (ECE) and English language teaching (ELT). From ECE, Bredekamp & Rosegrant (1992) describe the Theoretical Phase as:

> based upon specific assumptions about how children learn and develop and also on relevant theories of curriculum that guide decision-making about what is important to learn and when (p.12).

From the ELT field, Richards and Rodgers (1986) describe this stage as "approaches" which are:

> the theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language learning (p.16).

The blending of the two fields of study made the developed curriculum unique. Each of the fields informed the other in terms of theoretical underpinnings, including the roles of teachers and learners, curriculum development, appropriate materials, and specific procedures.

A review of the literature from early childhood education showed that the term "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" is most recently permeating the writings and classroom practices in the United States. Developmentally Appropriate Practice or DAP is a set of seven assumptions about the teaching and learning of young children which was developed by the National Association of Educators of Young Children in the United States (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p.14-17):

1. Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.
2. Children construct knowledge.
3. Children learn through social interactions with adults and children.
4. Children's learning reflects a reoccurring cycle that begins in awareness and moves to exploration, to inquiry, and finally to utilization.
5. Children learn through play.
6. Children's interest and "need to know" motivates learning.
7. Human development and learning are characterized by individual variation.

There is no mention in these assumptions of young children learning the alphabet, phonics, or reading and writing. Rather, the goals reflect the needs of the young children. Underlying these assumptions are the research and writings of two leading authorities, John Dewey (Dewey, 1916) of the United States and Lev Vygotsky (Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978) of the former Soviet Union. Dewey's writings though from the 1920s still greatly influence education in America today. More recently Vygotsky's works also of the 1920s but translated into English in the 1960s have made an important impact upon American education of young children.

The seven assumptions serve as the undergirding for the developed curriculum in terms of the learners - they are young children *first* and language learners *second*. With this in mind, a grid was developed with the seven assumptions across the top. Under each assumption, specific classroom behaviors were outlined as presented in Bredekamp & Rosegrant (1992). For example, assumption #3 is "Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel physiologically safe and secure. Classroom practices exemplifying this assumption are (1) Little paperwork or adult lectures, (2) Times of physical play and quiet, restful times, (3) The classroom is a safe, happy, comfortable place, and (4) Continuity exists between the home and school - i.e. parent involvement. The grid not only listed the assumptions but provided a description of them in terms of classroom practices.

Theories, research, and practices from the field of English language teaching was next examined. A thorough literature review revealed that current classroom practices

include Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, the Comprehensive Input Hypothesis, and Comprehension-Based Learning. The theories underlying these practices were believed to correspond with Developmentally Appropriate Practice for young children.

Down the side of the grid, the ELT theories and methods were listed along with a description of the classroom practices as determined from the review of the literature. For example "Communicative Language Teacher" in terms of classroom practice can be described as: (1) Focus on communication, not grammar, (2) Methods are functional and purposeful, (3) Communication is more important than fluency or accuracy; and (4) The learner's goal is spontaneous and meaningful communication.

Through the grid, the classroom practices of DAP and ELT were compared. If the DAP assumption and the ELT method/practices supported one another, then an "X" was written in the corresponding box. The result of this exercise showed many similar and supporting classroom practices from DAP and ELT. This was especially true for the English teaching methods of Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach.

The overlapping areas then became the theoretical basis of the developed curriculum. Through the visual representation of the grid, the theories about (1) how young children best learn and (2) the nature of language and language learning were found to correspond to one another in specific areas. Thus, the Theoretical Phase of the curriculum is based upon the seven assumptions of DAP and the theories underlying Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach.

Planning Phase

The second stage of the curriculum development was the Planning Phase and is described by Bredekamp & Rosegrant (1992) as "provide[ing] teachers with a framework

for guiding *what* those decisions become (p.66). The decisions are those obtained from the Theoretical Phase regarding what it is important that the children learn and when. In the field of English language teaching, this phase is termed the "design". Richards and Rodgers (1986) define it as (1) the syllabus design and content, (2) the objectives, and (3) the roles of the learners and teachers.

Following current early childhood education practices, the framework of the presentation of English in the curriculum was through the use of *themes*. Theme-based instruction, frequently used in American preschools, is the use of one central topic or idea upon which various activities are built. Theme-based instruction is especially appropriate for a curriculum used internationally as it allows for the topics be relevant to the local environment and experiences of the learners. However, there are themes generally of interest to young children around the world and some of these were utilized in the developed curriculum (e.g. family, animals).

From English language teaching, the results of studies in the first and second language acquisition of English guided the design of the curriculum. The studies revealed patterns of development in phonology, morphemes, and syntax. A list of similarities and differences in L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) acquisition of English was devised. From this list developmental patterns emerged that occurred in both L1 and L2 English acquisition. These patterns became the content of the English vocabulary and syntax of the curriculum. This content was based upon the assumption that the patterns developmentally acquired in both L1 and L2 acquisition of English should be introduced first to young learners. This assumption is drawn from studies showing that learners who receive grammar-based instruction pass through the same developmental sequences and make the same types of errors as learners in natural settings (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

Thus, the Planning Phase or design of the curriculum was based upon both ECE and ELT, followed a theme-based approach, and included relevant and developmentally appropriate vocabulary and syntax.

Implementation Phase

The Implementation Phase is the third phase of curriculum development and is described by Bredekamp & Rosegrant (1992) for early childhood educators as "*what* happens in the classroom - *how, where, when* teaching occurs" (p.66). In English language teaching, Richards & Rodgers (1986) call this phase "procedures" and consider it to be the time to develop the specific classroom objectives. In this study the specific classroom activities were planned each weekend based upon the theme and the vocabulary and syntax to be presented. However, as with all teaching, daily changes and refinements were required based upon the students' responses and understanding.

The curriculum was implemented for six weeks at a private school in Okinawa, Japan. The students attended for twenty-nine days from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This length of time of four hours was appropriate for their ages of 4-5 years and the time of the year - June and July. The daily schedule was determined from current practices that are considered developmentally appropriate for young children and certain demands of the private school (i.e. Bible time):

8:00 - 8:30 Arrival and outside play
8:30 - 9:00 Bible story and songs (interpreted by a Japanese aide)
9:00 - 9:40 English language through large group experiences
9:40 - 10:20 Inside play time at learning centers
10:20 - 10:40 Toileting and snack
10:40 - 11:10 Outside play
11:10 - 11:40 English language through large group experiences
11:40 - 11:55 Oral reading by teacher
11:55 - 12:00 Preparation to go home

Other practices commonly found in American preschools were also utilized. *Learning centers* were used as a way of physically organizing the classroom to divide the students into smaller groups for play and learning. The learning centers in my classroom varied throughout the six weeks but included such areas as: library, painting, grocery store, kitchen, various types of building blocks, puzzles and numerous other games and toys. The centers included child-sized props and toys. Whenever possible the materials in the learning centers reflected the theme of the week. Generally, the children decided with whom to play and where.

Pre-literacy exposure to English was made available as often as possible. This included the names of most classroom objects written on a card and placed on the object, the group writing of language experience stories, signs and pictures of English-worded stores and restaurants (i.e. "McDonald's", "Kentucky Fried Chicken"), and an extensive amount of oral reading to the students. The stories were repetitive and predictable which led to quicker understanding by the students. The preliteracy activities exposed the children to the purpose of print, the directionality of print (left-to-right, top-to-bottom for English), and the enjoyment of print.

Work Jobs was an additional component of the classroom that is typical in many American classrooms for young children. Two to three students were selected each day to complete one or two "Work Jobs". Work Jobs were tasks designed to reinforce the content presented during the past week and to strengthen the child's development in cognition, language, and motor skills. For example, one Work Job consisted of the children sorting plastic animals objects into three piles on a card that showed a house, a zoo, or a farm. As the work was checked, individual time with each student occurred as well as a time for assessment to determine if the material had been learned or needed to be reviewed.

Spiral Review Phase

The Spiral Review Phase was not described by ECE or ELT researchers or writers. Rather, it was developed by the teacher-researcher as a means to determine changes and revisions that would be required of the developed and implemented curriculum. The changes and revisions were determined from the teacher-researcher's daily and weekly journals. The journals allowed for reflection of the curriculum and for redesigning it as needed. Once analyzed through "Ethnograph", the journals provided a means of reporting the results of the study.

Results

The results of this qualitative study were determined from a variety of sources thus providing triangulation. The sources were (1) daily and weekly teacher-researcher journals, (2) student pre- and post evaluation using the Pre-Language Assessment Scale (Pre-LAS), (De Avila & Duncan, 1985), and (3) student expressive language samples. Each of the sources provided different kinds of information. Time does not permit me to discuss all of the findings but three were selected that are particularly noteworthy: (1) the importance of the development of listening skills, (2) the results of the Pre-LAS, and (3) the results of the language samples.

The Importance of Developing Listening Skills

When looking through the ESL-EFL publisher's catalogues, books concerning listening skills are available only for teenage or adult populations. No books are written about the young learner's needs and ideas about on how to teach listening skills. From my teaching experience, I firmly believe that learners develop receptive language before expressive language. Therefore, the ability to listen is the critical skill in developing

listening skills. Through observing the students in Work Jobs I realized that is was the length of the utterance not the specific words that caused the learners to respond correctly or incorrectly.

For example, given the tape-recorded command "Put the little girl under the red chair" many of the students could not complete the task. Three different-sized boy and girl dolls, two colored chairs, and two colored tables were provided. In order to correctly respond to the command the students needed to remember five elements - little - girl - red - chair - under.

This task was not merely a receptive vocabulary task, but an auditory memory task as well. The English language learners were required to remember five elements. For young children, this task must also be recognized as a cognitive skill that is still developing as are their visual and auditory memory systems.

As I devised activities to stimulate the students' auditory memories I found that most of the children had an average of two-three English elements which they could remember. I began to sequence and add the auditory activities to the curriculum. For example the student would lay down their school objects in front of them (i.e.. glue, scissors, cup, paper). I would give commands to pick up first two, then up to four elements, (i.e. Cup - paper; Glue - scissors - paper -cup). The students could not look at the objects or begin picking them up until I had put my hand down indicating that I was finished talking. As the students improved the length of their auditory memories for commands, I would complicate the activities by adding adjectives to the nouns, thus lengthening the number of elements to be remembered.

The addition of auditory memory or listening skills became an integral piece to the curriculum that I had not initially included. From the Implementation Phase I discovered that teaching listening skills are an important prerequisite to receptive language skills.

The Results of the Pre-LAS

The Pre-LAS is an instrument designed to measure the receptive and expressive language of preschool children, ages 4-6 years of age for whom English is a second language. Because of its specific age range, I deemed that is was an appropriate assessment tool to use with my Japanese, kindergarten students.

During day two and three of the summer session, I conducted individual assessments of my students. Each assessment took between 3-5 minutes depending upon the abilities of the student. The subscales of the Pre-LAS are:

I & II -assesses the students' abilities in receptive language through completing commands and pointing to specific pictures

III - assesses their expressive abilities in naming household objects

IV - assesses their auditory memory for morphemes

V & VI - assesses their expressive language and auditory memory by having them complete sentences and retell stories. None of the students were able to complete any of these items as they did not understand the tasks required of them

All 16 students completed the Pre-LAS. Fifteen of the students had attended the English school previously for nine months and, therefore, were expected to have some receptive knowledge of English. One student, Ted, however, was newly enrolled in the class, with no previous exposure to English. It was quite interesting to monitor Ted's progress during the six weeks of summer school.

The ages of the students and results of their Pre-LAS scores are listed below. The raw scores were calculated into a converted score according to the administration manual. Based upon the converted score, the students' English proficiency was determined to be: Non-English Speaker (NES) level 1 and 2, Limited English Speaker (LES) level 3, or Fluent English Speaker (FES) level 4 and 5.

Initial PRE-LAS Results

Student	Age	Initial Score	Proficiency Category
A	5-1	46.0	NES-1
B	5-7	60.5	NES-1
C	5-5	60.5	NES-1
D	5-7	46.0	NES-1
E	5-7	41.5	NES-1
F	5-2	38.5	NES-1
G	5-4	46.0	NES-1
H	4-10	28.0	NES-1
I	5-8	46.0	NES-1
J	5-9	36.5	NES-1
K	4-8	43.0	NES-1
L	4-11	37.5	NES-1
M	4-6	23.0	NES-1
N	5-2	27.5	NES-1
O	5-4	13.5	NES-1
Ted	5-4	2.5	NES-1

Despite the great difference between the students' scores, they were all still considered to be Non-English Speakers, category 1. This determination seemed appropriate as even the highest students were able to respond to receptive language tasks only and rarely elicited expressive English within the classroom.

The Pre-LAS was not presented again to the students until the last three days of school, six weeks later. All the students scores increased although some much more than others.

Final PRE-LAS Results

Name	Points Changed	Initial Proficiency	Final Proficiency
A	+ 32.5	NES-1	**LES**
B	+ 15.5	NES-1	**LES**
C	+ 13.5	NES-1	**LES**
D	+ 15.0	NES-1	**NES-2**
E	+ 22.5	NES-1	**NES-2**
F	+ 30.5	NES-1	**NES-2**
G	+ 6.0	NES-1	NES-1
H	+ 21.0	NES-1	NES-1
I	+ 1.5	NES-1	NES-1
J	+ 9.5	NES-1	NES-1
K	+ 1.5	NES-1	NES-1
L	+ 3.5	NES-1	NES-1
M	+ 14.5	NES-1	NES-1
N	+ 7.5	NES-1	NES-1
O	+ 1.5	NES-1	NES-1
Ted	+ 23.5	NES-1	NES-1

In the teacher-researcher's journal it was noted that the second set of scores was impressive considering the short length of summer school. However, the increase could be due to additional factors, not necessarily simply the implementation of the curriculum:

1. The learners had been listening to English for nine months. Their expressive skills should begin to emerge if they are motivated to do so.

2. During the initial assessments only two students were able to understand the directions for Subscale V "Finishing Stories". None of the students were able to understand the directions for Subscale VI "Let's Tell Stories".

   At this point, the Pre-LAS was not measuring what it was supposed to measure - repetition of English sentences and completion of English sentences. Rather it was measuring the students' ability to understand test directions. Thus, the Pre-LAS was not a valid assessment tool for Subscales IV-V in the initial assessment.

3. Individual student motivation, age level, developmental level, and intelligence are factors.

4. Amount of time exposed to English is a factor.

5. The implemented curriculum was appropriate for the age and developmental needs and assisted the learners in their language learning.

In the final assessment, the number of students able to understand the directions for Subscale V increased from 2 to 7 and for Subscale VI from 0 to 7. Since any partial completion of any subscale increases the students' raw score, the students' final scores increased dramatically over the initial scores.

The range of the increased scores varied widely, from only 1.5 for three children to 30.5 for Student F and 32.5 for Student O. It is especially noteworthy to examine Ted's scores which intially were much lower than Student O's score but then surpassed him by the end of the six weeks. Student O had previously attended the school for nine months; Ted had never previously been exposed to English. This would be an interesting study in its own.

In addition, three learners moved up from the **NES-1** category to the **LES** category and three moved from the **NES-1** category to the **NES-2** category. The ten other learners stayed at **NES-1.** While initially it seemed exciting to view the progress of the students, I was cautioned by the lack of validity in the intial assessment. By the final assessment many of the students were able to understand the directions to all the subscales which greatly increased their scores - perhaps at a rate that was even greater than their true growth in English. With these concerns and reservations, an evaluation of the Language Samples was conducted to compare their results with the Pre-LAS.

The Language Samples

The Language Samples afforded a more comprehensive and detailed view of the learners' progress in English based upon their spontaneous use of the language. Taken

together the Pre-LAS and the Language Samples offered a good deal of information about the learners' abilities and progress in receptive and expressive English.

In keeping a record of the learners' spontaneous, expressive language, each student's name was written on the top of several pages in a small notebook that fit into the teacher's pocket. As often as possible the students' expressive English that was spoken to the teacher or was overheard was written in the notebook . Next to the verbatim utterances, the situation in which it occurred and the probable intent were written.

Two types of samples were recorded from each child: (1) spontaneous language samples as the children naturally interacted in the classroom environment and (2) a tape recorded rendering of the children's retelling of a familiar story ("Goldilocks and the Three Bears"). Both Language Samples were entered into and analyzed by a computer program, "Parrot Easy Language Sample Analysis Plus for Windows" (Weiner, 1995).

Although during Weeks 1 and 2 of school, the children did not use English expressively, by Week 3, expressive language samples were recorded from several of the children as they were beginning to use the vocabulary that had been presented within the classroom. These were often memorized chucks such as "Help me" or "Please".

By Week #5, the students' progress is noted in the teacher-researcher's journal, "the students continue to increase the length and complexity of their utterances and their desire to speak in English" (Weekly Journal #5 - July 10, p. 7), Example include:

Student F: "Norihito is yellow one" (Intent: *Norihito has a yellow one.*)
Student F: "She is painting"
Student A: "Teacher, look mine. It's cute"

The Retelling of a Familiar Children's Story

Goldilocks and the Three Bears was read aloud to the children at least three times a week. Each Friday the story was acted out with props. As the weeks progressed, the students were able to initiate the Bears' dialogue as the story was narrated. Over time the students memorized this dialogue at some level. But the dialogue still corresponded to their overall syntactic level as they made errors of tense and number and in vocabulary, such as: "Who eat cereal?".

The decision was made to tape record each child retelling "The Three Bears" as part of their final language assessment (Weekly Journal #5 - July 10). It was believed that this exercise would be a valuable piece of the language assessment as:

> ... it offered a different kind of language from the students. It was not totally spontaneous in that the students had heard the story many times before. However, it was their attempt to retell it and showed their auditory memory for certain portions of repetitive language (i.e. 'Whose been sleeping in my bed?'). It also showed the 'linguistic chunks' which they had learned (Weekly Journal #6 - July 17, p. 3).

Conclusions from the Two Types of Language Sample

Through computer analysis, a number of results from the learners' language samples both spontaneous and retelling a story appeared. These include:

1. All learners used more *Number of Words* than more *Number of Different Words* (as is probably true of all speakers).

2. The *Number of Words* they used corresponded to the *Number of Morphemes*. The more words they used, the greater the number of morphemes used.

3. The *Mean Length of Response* refers to the number of words per utterance with the difference shown between Students A and O being 2.54.

4. In contrast the *Mean Length of Utterance* refers to the number of morphemes per utterance. Here the difference between Students A and O is greater at 3.23, thus showing a more subtle yet important difference in Student A and O's expressive language.

5. The Longest Utterance is an informative number as it demonstrates the student's expressive, spontaneous English abilities. Student A was the highest with nine morphemes, "Let's do like this and then it's here" and Student O the lowest at two morphemes, "Teacher, rocket".

6. Student A's spontaneous samples were the most complex, followed by Student F and Student G, followed by Ted outpacing Student O. *These order of results were identical to those determined from the final Pre-LAS assessment.*

Thus, while the Pre-LAS and the Language Samples provided different types of information the results from the two methods corresponded well together. The Pre-LAS demonstrated that 6/16 the students moved upward one proficiency level in English. The Language Samples showed that over the six-week period, 15/16 students increased their length of the responses and utterances, and increased the number of different words they used.

Implications and Recommendations

From the students' progress in both receptive and expressive language over the six weeks period, this study showed that *a short-term immersion program is a viable and productive method of teaching young children English.* With this success, a number of implications and recommendations emerged.

Recommendations for Classroom Practice

1. The use of a theme-based, hands-on interactive approach
2. The teacher as model of comprehensible English input
3. The provision of informal language opportunities
4. A focus on improvement of listening skills through the development of auditory memory
5. The inclusion of preliteracy activities
6. The use of a variety of assessment methods.

Recommendations for Materials Development

1. Material writers must consider the special needs of young language learners.
2. Curriculum and materials for young learners should not be too specific or controlled.

Conclusion

The curriculum developed and implemented with young Japanese children served to demonstrate the effectiveness of materials that are both developmentally appropriate for young children with regard to their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical levels and developmentally appropriate in terms of English language acquisition. *If learners of English continue to be younger and younger children, then programs and materials that are appropriate for their specific age and developmental levels must be developed.*

Resources

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